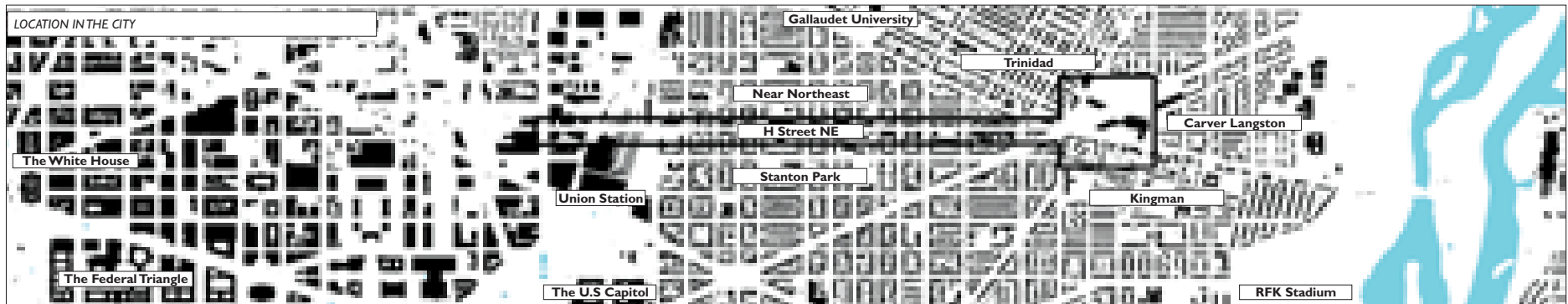


TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	ii	5 CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT	16	9 IMPLEMENTATION	50
1 INTRODUCTION	1	5.1 Land Use, Zoning & Development	16	9.1 Land Use, Zoning & Development	50
1.1 A Top Priority	1	5.2 Retail Environment	22	9.2 Retail Environment	51
1.2 Plan Goals & Objectives	1	5.3 Traffic, Transit & Parking	23	9.3 Traffic, Transit & Parking	52
1.3 Key Community Issues	1	5.4 Public Realm	28	9.4 Public Realm	52
1.4 Study Area	2	6 CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES	30	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	53
1.5 Planning Process	2	6.1 Land Use, Zoning & Development	30	APPENDIX A - MARKET ANALYSIS	58
2 PLANNING CONTEXT	4	6.2 Retail Environment	30	APPENDIX B - MERCHANT AND CONSUMER SURVEYS AND SUMMARIES	74
2.1 Strategic Location in City	4	6.3 Traffic, Transit & Parking	31	APPENDIX C - NON-PREFERRED STREET SECTION ALTERNATIVES	80
2.2 Private Development	5	6.4 Public Realm	31	APPENDIX D - "ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES IN OUR NATION'S CAPITAL"	87
2.3 District Initiatives	6	7 VISION & PLAN FRAMEWORK	32		
3 MARKET CONDITIONS SUMMARY	8	7.1 Vision	32		
3.1 Methodology	8	7.2 Plan Framework	33		
3.2 Economic Overview	8	8 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN	35		
3.3 Market Analysis	8	8.1 Development Program Overview	35		
4 RETAIL ENVIRONMENT	11	8.2 Strategic Development Plan by District	36		
4.1 Overview of Issues	11	8.3 Corridor-Wide Transportation Improvements	48		
4.2 Market Context	11				
4.3 Retail Audit	13				



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose and Roles

The H Street NE Strategic Development Plan was developed to guide community, private sector, and public agency actions and investments in revitalizing this traditional neighborhood corridor over the next ten years. Over 500 stakeholders - including residents, merchants, property owners, District agencies and investors - provided inputs on market analysis, neighborhood assets, transportation objectives, and current and proposed land uses, towards the development of this Plan.

Project Boundaries and Goals

The Project Area extends from North Capitol Street to 17th Street NE, just beyond the Hechinger Mall. The Area extends approximately 1.5 miles, comprising 13 blocks lined by a mixture of small local commercial establishments, some national chains, local churches, significant vacant land, abandoned buildings and underutilized upper floors.

The challenge from the H Street communities to the District was to produce a preferred mix of diverse uses and retail goods and services. Community goals in this planning effort are:

- to provide vital information and expert recommendations to help existing businesses grow and thrive on H Street NE;
- to recommend a realistic strategy for encouraging the reuse of the numerous vacant lots and storefronts on the corridor to create a desirable mix of commercial offerings on the corridor;

- to assist in determining the public investment needed to improve the infrastructure and physical appearance of the corridor; and
- to improve the physical and market perception of the corridor to attract shoppers, tourists, residents, visitors, and private investors.

Existing Conditions and Expectations

Though there is significant redevelopment potential on H Street, "real" expectations must be maintained about H Street given the following conditions:

- 1.5 miles of successful retail on H Street is unrealistic over a 10 year planning horizon;
- Shopping habits have changed - few customers are willing to walk 1.5 miles for basic goods and services;
- Quality urban retailers locate where there is active foot traffic of those with income virtually guaranteed on the corridor; and
- H Street is within a very "urban" location, and there are responsibilities (perhaps some inconveniences) that all must share for the larger success.

The H Street plan accepts these conditions and provides the following direction:

- Some retail uses are redundant;
- The current demographic is strong enough to support vibrant retail, but will not support a full 1.5 miles of thriving retail;

- As a single destination, the corridor is too long and, rather, should have clear themes that describe the kinds of preferred development and uses while supporting a central retail district; and
- Introducing housing on H Street will facilitate retail retention and attraction.

Key Issues

Land Use, Zoning & Development

- Repositioning the gateway locations (the Hechinger Mall area at the eastern gateway and the 3rd and H intersection at the western gateway) for redevelopment;
- Accommodating new uses through lot consolidation, historic preservation and selective demolition;
- Modifying land uses and/or zoning for preferred development;
- Encouraging new construction and preservation with building design and development guidelines; and
- Diversifying land uses with mixed income housing on the corridor.

Retail Environment

- Diversifying the retail mix;
- Marketing the corridor to new retail users;
- Encouraging revitalization activities along the corridor; i.e. tax increment financing district, HUB and Enterprise zone benefits, etc.;
- Building the capacity of corridor merchants and property owners, i.e. Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) or others; and



- Developing local small businesses.

Transit, Traffic & Parking

- Parking new uses appropriately and establishing a traffic/transportation management system; and
- Assessing impact of light rail transit on corridor on parking, land uses and zoning.

Public Realm

- Developing public realm guidelines for streetscapes;
- Improving safety of sidewalks and street crossings; and
- Creating public gathering places (i.e. sidewalk cafés, etc.).

H Street Strategic Plan Framework and Recommendations

Land Use, Zoning & Development

Office Development. Market analyses suggest a capacity on the corridor for approximately 200,000 square feet space suited for small professional, non-profit, and association offices. While it may be difficult to attract developers of large, Class A offices like those located downtown, developers of smaller-scale projects should find H Street NE to be an attractive, highly accessible location.

Housing. H Street will become a living corridor with over 750 new and/or rehabilitated residential units, providing needed support to the corridor retail elements as well as additional “eyes and feet on the street” to improve safety, security and retail viability.

Retail Environment

Retail market analyses indicate that over the next 10 years, the area will support approximately 300,000 square feet of retail of the type and variety desired by local residents. While not enough to fill all storefronts along the corridor, the projected demand is strong enough to spark the revitalization of retailing in the center of the corridor and complementary retail at the western and eastern gateways. Ground floor spaces outside the areas targeted for retail revitalization may include professional offices, studio spaces, and residential uses.

Transit, Traffic & Parking

H Street is proposed to be primarily a transit and pedestrian corridor with retail parking. Enhanced transit service on H Street - potentially bus rapid transit (BRT) or light rail transit (LRT), similar to a modernized trolley service – is proposed, with potential stops on the apex of the Hopscotch Bridge, 4th and H Street NE, 8th and H Street NE, 12th and H Street NE and 15th and Benning Road NE. The service will connect the corridor to Georgetown, Woodley Park and the Minnesota Avenue metro station.

Parking will be shared and managed. Public parking is envisioned within a redeveloped Murry's site, H Street Connection site, 1300 block interior south side. Similarly, parking agreements are proposed with Union Station and Burnham Place. While parking in neighboring residential areas is discouraged, on-street parking along the corridor will be permitted without rush-hour limitations.

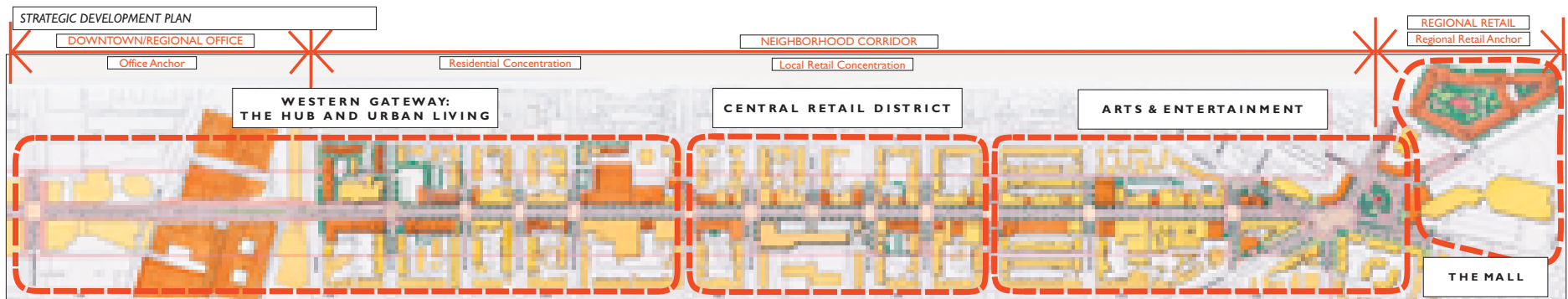
Traffic speeds will be slowed and smoothed through traffic calming measures. All street lights are to be re-timed to control the flow of traffic through the corridor. Finally, the complicated intersection at Bladensburg, Florida, H Street, and Maryland will be improved to enhance safe pedestrian, transit, and vehicular movement.

Public Realm

H Street NE is envisioned to be primarily a transit and pedestrian corridor. While vehicular traffic can and will continue to move through the corridor, the installation of stop lights at all intersection and provision of proper pedestrian crossings ensures that the traffic moves safely and efficiently.

An H Street public realm plan is proposed to be developed within the DDOT planning process. A consistent streetscape will tie the corridor together and improve the pedestrian environment. This includes, but is not limited, to wider sidewalks along the corridor; new streetscaping (trees, pedestrian scale lighting, bike racks, etc.), parallel on-street parking and signage (including those to local points of interest, e.g., Gallaudet University, Northeast Branch library, neighborhood schools, etc.). These will encourage more intense and diverse pedestrian activity along the corridor, such as outdoor dining on wider intersecting sidewalks.

Heritage-based tourism industry is invited to develop programs for H Street, possibly involving a complete survey of historic sites along H Street. The opportunity of a Business Improvement District (BID) to include H Street should also be pursued.



Vision for H Street and the Strategic Development Plan

The Strategic Development Plan recommends four (4) thematic areas along the H Street Corridor:

- Western Gateway: The Hub and Urban Living (North Capitol to 7th Street NE);
- Central Retail District (7th Street to 12th Street NE);
- Arts & Entertainment (12th Street to Bladensburg Ave NE); and
- The Mall: Hechinger Mall/Formers Sears Sites (Bladensburg Avenue to 17th Street NE).

Overall Development Program Summary

District	Existing	Building Area (sf)		Total
		Removed	New	
Western Gateway	688,000	83,000	458,000	1,063,000
Central Retail	303,000	81,000	178,000*	400,000
Arts & Entertainment	299,000	42,000	166,000	423,000
The Mall	214,000	0	71,000**	285,000
Total	1,504,000	206,000	873,000	2,171,000

*The estimate of new building area for the Central Retail District does not assume redevelopment of the H Street Connection.

**The estimate of new building area for the Hechinger/Formers Sears District assumes the Former Sears site is developed with 45,000 square feet of retail use.

Western Gateway

Western Gateway Development Program Summary

Use	Existing	Building Area (sf)		Total
		Removed	New	
Retail	47,994	23,489	56,660	81,165
Office/Commercial	414,122	29,188	100,810	485,744
Residential	86,665	633	409,557	495,589
Exempt	138,977	30,000	-108,977	0
Total (approx.)	688,000	83,000	458,000	1,063,000

The Hub. The area between North Capitol Street and 2nd Street NE will be developed significantly over the next few years. While Union Station is a regional retail and transportation hub, it turns its back to H Street and instead primarily fronts the corridor with parking; no other buildings currently front H Street within this stretch. The area is currently very hostile to pedestrians with speeding cars and no streetscaping.

The development of the Station Place project by Louis Dreyfus Properties and the Union Station Air Rights (Burnham Place) by Akridge Development creates a purpose for this critical transitional stretch of H Street at its western gateway. The proposals will help to strengthen the connection between "Burnham Place," Station Place, Union Station and the H Street corridor; serve overall objectives of neighborhood revitalization; and enhance the opportunity to create a unique multi-modal center in the heart of the District.

The salient features and recommendations for this district are summarized as follows:

- Union Station Air Rights project (Burnham Place) with H Street primary entrances, addresses and active uses on north and south sides;
- Shared parking agreement;
- Inviting and pedestrian-friendly streetscape treatment on bridge; and
- Shuttle service to facilitate movement to H Street uses.

Urban Living. The Urban Living subdistrict extends from 2nd Street NE to roughly 7th Street NE. Its proximity to transit and potential for infill development makes it suitable for primarily residential development. Housing will be higher density with architecture that appropriately marks the entrance to the H Street community. Limited ground floor retail such as dry cleaners, lunch counters, and some restaurants will support the demands of the new and existing residential and nearby office uses. Supportable retail in this area is estimated at 5,000 - 10,000 square feet.

- Proposed rezoning to optimize proximity to transit, create density to support proposed retail development and permit larger in-fill residential or mixed-use buildings;
- Minimum construction FAR of usable floor area within zero lot line development;
- Preservation of the Capital Children's Museum building - It is an excellent candidate for applying the historic preservation tax credits and any developers should be encouraged to take advantage of the credit to preserve the building. If the Capital Children's Museum remains at

its current location, the site should be redeveloped to incorporate residential and/or some small office uses and parking. Conversely, if it should relocate, the entire site should be redeveloped to include residential and parking; and

- “Gateway” streetscape treatment and public art at 3rd and H Street

Central Retail District

The area from 7th Street to 12th Street is envisioned as the centralized “downtown” of the H Street community. Retail uses will be strengthened, consolidated, and diversified here to offer residents, shoppers, and visitors the range of goods and services they seek. Housing and small office uses will be encouraged on the upper floors of developments and the historic character will be preserved. Parking will be enhanced by removing on-street parking restrictions and identifying opportunities for shared and structured parking to serve this district. Retail support will be greatest here with 150,000 - 200,000 square feet of retail concentrated in this area. The proposals are summarized as follows:

Central Retail District Development Program Summary

Use	Existing	Building Area (sf)		Total
		Removed	New	
Retail	160,863	53,717	61,275	168,421
Office/Commercial	78,100	20,797	35,145	92,448
Residential	64,257	7,368	82,005	138,894
Total (approx.)	303,000	81,000	178,000	400,000

- Infill construction up to full allowable zoning limits (2.5 FAR, 50 feet height limit, 60% occupancy), minimum construction FAR of usable floor area within zero lot line development;
- Concentrated neighborhood-serving retail retention, attraction and re-positioning;
- Distinctive streetscape treatment and public art at 8th and H Street;
- Coordinated technical assistance to existing businesses; and
- Long-term plans for the redevelopment of the H Street Connection with a mix of uses and in accordance with

the above guidelines include some municipal parking in redevelopment.

Arts & Entertainment

Building off the existing assets of the Atlas Theatre, H Street Playhouse and R.L. Christian Library, the area from 12th to 15th Street will provide art, entertainment and cultural activities to the residents and visitors of H Street. These cultural activities will be supported by complementary specialty retail uses such as sit-down restaurants, art galleries, art related retail, and other community services. Residential and office uses will be encouraged on upper-floors of developments, providing opportunities for live-work space for artists, performers, and professionals. Retail support in this area is around 15,000 - 40,000 square feet. Further information is outlined below:

Arts & Entertainment Development Program Summary

Use	Existing	Building Area (sf)		Total
		Removed	New	
Retail	107,496	16,319	51,220	142,397
Office/Commercial	109,942	15,271	43,270	137,941
Residential	81,902	10,246	71,085	142,741
Total (approx.)	299,000	42,000	166,000	423,000

- Construction and rehabilitation up to full allowable zoning limits (2.5 FAR, 50 feet height limit, 60% occupancy), minimum construction FAR of usable floor area within zero lot line;
- New library building at 13th and H Street; and
- Public art at both 13th and Maryland Avenue.

The Mall: Hechinger Mall/Former Sears Sites

There are two potential uses of the 5-acre former Sears site. The first envisions a large format big box retailer; while the other proposes 50 units per acre of residential development. A large format retail use may help the District to retain retail sales that currently leak out into surrounding jurisdictions, and it might bring more people through the H Street corridor therefore providing more visibility to local retailers.

Conversely, housing may generate additional customers for H Street businesses, though they would not be the immediate customers that businesses prefer. Key proposals for this district are outlined as follows:

The Mall Development Program Summary - Option A: Large Box Retailer

Use	Existing	Building Area (sf)		Total
		Removed	New	
Retail	213,854	0	71,500	285,354
Total (approx.)	214,000	0	71,000	285,000

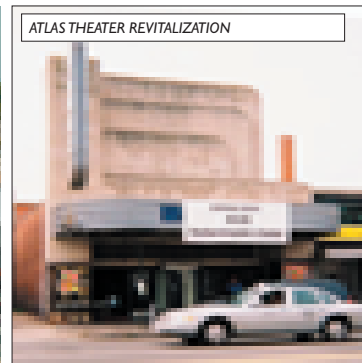
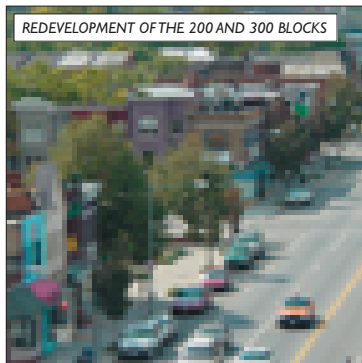
The Mall Development Program Summary - Option B: Residential Use

Use	Existing	Building Area (sf)		Total
		Removed	New	
Retail	213,854	0	36,146	250,000
Residential	0	0	250,000	250,000
Total (approx.)	214,000	0	286,000	500,000

The Mall Development Program Summary - Option C: Hybrid/Mixed Use

Use	Existing	Building Area (sf)		Total
		Removed	New	
Retail	213,854	0	63,400	277,254
Office/Commercial	0	0	72,000	72,000
Residential	0	0	134,000	134,000
Total (approx.)	214,000	0	269,000	483,000

- Construction and rehabilitation up to full allowable C-3-A zoning limits (4.0 FAR, 65 feet height limit, 75% occupancy for residential);
- Retail with mixed income housing on former Sears site;
- Redevelopment of Hechinger Mall site with a mix of uses (long term); and
- Pedestrian-friendly intersection.



Corridor-Wide Transportation Improvements

Transit Way Concept

Recommendations of the use of the right-of-way call for the following:

- 11' sidewalk widths on both sides of the right-of-way;
- 8' parking lane on both sides of the right-of-way with bulb-outs at each intersection to provide transit loading areas and reduce pedestrian crossing distances at intersections;
- 11' transit lanes on both sides of the right-of-way used exclusively for transit during rush hour; perhaps shared with other vehicles during non-rush hour. (These transit lanes could be shared by fixed rail transit serving predetermined station locations and buses serving each intersection); and
- Three 10' vehicular lanes which would allow for two lanes in the rush hour priority direction, and one counterflow lane in the center.

Public Parking

Proposed parking initiatives include the following:

- Full-Time Curb Parking - On-street parking should be permitted at all times along the corridor. Curbside parking improves the pedestrian environment and helps establish an image of H Street as a neighborhood that is open for business. The street section that the plan recommends maintains the number of travel lanes (with reduced widths) along the corridor.
- Increased Off-Street Parking - Off-street parking must be easy to access, distributed to be convenient to all the com-

mercial uses, and must be safe. The plan for providing off-street parking is a combination of short-term and long-term initiatives and surface versus structured parking opportunities. It is difficult for urban neighborhood retail areas such as this to provide adequate parking, since the cost of the parking structure is an unrealistic burden, the lot size is small and there is a goal of preservation. The additional cost of parking can make it difficult for urban retail areas to compete with their suburban counterparts. Therefore, the District should consider the construction of parking structures through the parking authority held by NCRC as municipal projects or private/public partnerships, e.g. the new parking garage in Adams Morgan, or the parking districts used in Bethesda and Silver Spring, Maryland.

Implementation

Land Use, Zoning & Redevelopment

First Projects. District efforts and resources should be focused on the following as stage-setters for the Plan's success:

- Redevelopment of the 200 and 300 blocks;
- Retail Development;
- 8th & H Infill Development;
- Atlas Theater Revitalization; and
- Air Rights & Station Place Developments.

Support Planning for Future of the Capitol Children's Museum Site. This site represents one of the most important development opportunities for the corridor and is especially critical to further investment in the Western Gate-

way District. A marketing program should be developed with the Children's Museum for a developer that will adaptively reuse the structure with tax credits and develop the remainder of the site consistent with the Plan. The program may be expanded to a design competition in the event that the museum is expanded to a National Children's Museum.

Target Code Enforcement. As part of the larger effort to improve the corridor's image and attractiveness, code enforcement activities should be increased, with particular focus on the condition of vacant property and buildings and the conditions of side yards and alleys.

Marketing of Incentives & Assistance. The District should take steps to alert property owners of existing and proposed incentive and assistance programs. This effort should include periodic updates and briefings regarding District and federal programs.

Remove Barriers to Reinvestment. Potential economic and regulatory barriers to the preservation and adaptive reuse of the corridor's older commercial buildings should be identified.

Establish a New Zoning Overlay District. The current zoning on the corridor does not provide regulations that allow the desired development patterns. Rezoning is not applicable as there are no existing zonings that will permit the development envisioned for the corridor. Instead, the Plan recommends that an overlay district be developed for the entire corridor that references and incorporates the form-based controls of the design guidelines. An overlay district can be

an efficient mechanism to ensure the implementation of the guidelines and is a common process in the District.

Expand Survey Efforts & Historic District Designation. The scope of the Near Northeast Civic Association cultural and historical study should be expanded to gather information necessary to evaluate the eligibility of an H Street corridor historic district. Based on the findings, the designation of an H Street Commercial Corridor National Register Historic District should be pursued.

Encourage Preservation through the Promotion of Existing Tax Credit Programs. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings on the corridor should be encouraged with the use of the 20% federal tax credit (once a historic district is established) and the 10% federal tax credit for buildings that were erected before 1936.

Interpret History & Culture. Define an educational program aimed at raising awareness of H Street's heritage, historic buildings, and historic preservation potential. The corridor's history and unique historic character should be incorporated into a marketing plan for the corridor.

Heritage Tourism. Opportunities to promote H Street as a heritage tourism destination should be explored with the DC Heritage Tourism Coalition.

Retail Environment

Business Development. An interactive, educational process with H Street merchants should be instated to enhance their understanding of "Retail Best Practices", as part of the Main Street effort and in conjunction with Restore DC. Special issues such as general retail accounting, inventory control, budgeting and individual marketing should be covered in workshops or through one-on-one technical assistance.

Façade & Sign Improvement. Additional funding, design assistance and general technical advice should be provided to businesses for façade and signage improvements, under condition of compliance with existing and proposed design/ signage design guidelines.

Corridor Branding. Corridor stakeholders should work with the DC Marketing Center to help craft new image materials for H Street, e.g. a 'neighborhood sheet' highlighting the community's new direction as a center of neighborhood life

for North Capitol Hill residents.

Corridor Marketing. Assistance and involvement from DC Marketing Center is sought in directing new and expanding retailers, as well as retail brokers, toward H Street.

Business Improvement District Establishment. The feasibility of incorporating H Street into the Capitol Hill Business Improvement District (BID) as a subBID should be explored. The H Street subBID's contribution should entitle merchants, residents and workers to many of the Capitol Hill BID's offerings, including enhanced security and maintenance, streetscape improvements and homeless services. The H Street subBID should negotiate a stipend to conduct its own marketing, but avoid a situation where its brand is absorbed by Capitol Hill.

Transit, Traffic & Parking

Detailed Analysis of Traffic and Transit Strategies. Future analyses should focus on H Street's development as a transit way with pedestrian movement, vehicular through traffic and on-street parking.

Public Parking Improvements. Surface parking should be developed on the vacant land behind the library and in the middle of the block behind the Atlas Theater. Shared parking agreements should be sought which would permit use of the Auto Zone and H Street Connection lots for evening and off-hour use.

New Public Parking. Public parking should be incorporated within the redeveloped Murry's site, H Street connection site, the Auto Zone site and the 1300 block interior site.

Full-Time Curb Parking. On-street parking should be permitted at all times along the corridor.

Pedestrian Crossings. Pedestrian crossings should be well marked along the entire corridor; and especially at the intersection of H street, Bladensburg, Maryland, Benning Road and 15th Street (5 Points).

Public Realm

Hopscotch Bridge Improvements. The proposed redevelopment of the Union Station Air Rights suggests improvements to the western gateway via direct pedestrian access and improved streetscape. For this and other developments

fronting the bridge, every effort should be made to visually and physically connect the sidewalks to new buildings.

Eastern Gateway Civic Space. Modifications are proposed for the intersection of H Street, Maryland Avenue and Florida Avenue to improve the pedestrian experience, infill street frontage and create a small public space at the street terminus. These proposed changes may occur over a longer term and requires a detailed design and traffic study.

Corridor-wide Streetscape Improvements. Streetscape conditions should be improved along the entire corridor to standards appropriate to the development type described under the design guidelines.

Summary

H Street NE will offer diverse retail goods and services and provide cultural and housing opportunities to strengthen the corridor's competitive advantage and image while conveying its unique history. Priority is given to transit enhancements (e.g. proposed trolley), pedestrian-oriented planning and design and parking management and expansion.

The various thematic districts defined for the corridor build upon existing assets and provide different amenities to the community and visitors. As the corridor revives, it remains important that stakeholders stay focused on achieving a "realistic" and market based program of uses

Various area stakeholder groups are expected to shepherd the Plan through its implementation. ANC 6A and 6C should pro-actively encourage continued economic and physical development consistent with the overall goals of the Plan, particularly regarding issues of zoning. The H Street NE Main Street should lead cleanliness and safety improvement efforts and safety issues and work for the community in retaining, expanding and attracting preferred retailers. The H Street CDC should develop/redevelop their properties in accordance with the Plan. Similarly, private developers/investors should also adhere to the Plan's recommendations. Local merchants should meet the new and ongoing demand for quality goods and services at competitive prices. Area residents should hold public and private agencies and officials accountable and participate in ANC and Main Street committee meetings, projects and activities. Finally, public agencies should continue to work with the H Street stakeholders to facilitate more investment.